



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

FUGITIVE SOUGHT IN KOREAN HUMAN SMUGGLING PROBE ARRESTED BY ICE IN LOS ANGELES

SPOKANE, Wash. – A man who faces federal charges here for his role in a scheme to smuggle Korean nationals across Washington’s international border in November 2005 was apprehended yesterday by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in Los Angeles. The group of 12 smuggled Korean nationals, including seven women and five men, were destined for the Los Angeles area.

Jeong Ho Kim, 38, was taken into custody Thursday morning without incident at an apartment on South Normandie Avenue in Los Angeles. Kim was named in a 13-count indictment handed down by a federal grand jury in the Eastern District of Washington earlier this month for conspiracy to transport an illegal alien and aiding and abetting the transportation of an illegal alien.

“The Department of Justice and this office place a high priority on these cases because of the serious threat that human smuggling presents to our country and the integrity of our borders,” said James A. McDevitt, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Washington.

ICE began its investigation in November 2005 after Border Patrol agents with U.S. Customs and Border Protection intercepted a rented Chevrolet Tahoe carrying 12 Korean nationals near the international border in Oroville, Washington. While Kim was not in the Tahoe at the time, according to the indictment, he rented the car at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and instructed a co-conspirator where to pick up the aliens near the border. ICE agents say the investigation into the smuggling scheme is ongoing.

“Human smuggling is an enforcement priority for ICE because it undermines the integrity of our nation’s legal immigration system,” said Leigh Winchell, special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in Washington. “Additionally, smuggled aliens are often treated as a commodity and are exploited by the criminal networks that brought them here.”

Kim made his initial appearance in federal court in Los Angeles yesterday and waived his right to an identity hearing. A magistrate judge ordered him held without bond and Kim agreed to be returned to Spokane to face the charges.

#ICE#

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.